Introduction to Facebook

Facebook.com is a social utility or social networking website that connects people with their friends, family and other people in their lives. Facebook is just one of the many social networking websites that you can access on the internet. Other examples you may have heard of are MySpace, Twitter, and You Tube. These websites link together online communities of people or organizations who share similar interests and/or activities. Through these sites, linked individuals can communicate and share information by sending emails and instant messages, and posting photos, videos and links to other websites.

The website's name refers to the paper facebooks or yearbooks that some universities give to incoming students, faculty, and staff as a way to get to know other people on campus.

It is important to understand that Facebook is a free website and there is no charge to sign up and create a user account.

There are many features you can use on Facebook, such as the Wall, Status Updates, News Feed, Photos, Videos, Chat, and Applications. We will cover some frequently used features.

Let’s Look Around the Home Page

Signing up and signing in

Step 1. In order to use Facebook, you will need to Sign Up to create a user account. The first time you use Facebook, you will need to provide some information. They will ask you to fill in

- Your full name,
- Your email address
- A new password that you’ve created
- Your gender
- Your birthdate
- Agree to the terms of use

Note: Facebook requires all users to provide their real date of birth as both a safety precaution and as a means of preserving the integrity of the site. You will be able to hide this information from your profile if you wish.

Remember your email address and password; you will need to enter it into the blue box at the top of the screen to login each time you use Facebook after this point.

Step 2. Next, you will need to confirm the email address you provided. Follow the steps Facebook provides in the confirmation email to set up your account. Based on the email address you entered or the network you provided, Facebook will help you set up your home page accordingly. You need to check your email at this point in order to proceed.

Customizing your Facebook pages

Congratulations, you are now on Facebook!

Step 1. Fill out your profile by clicking on Profile at the top left of the page.

Then click Edit My Profile on the left. Follow the steps in the Edit tool to fill out any information you would like people in your network, or people you accept as friends, to view. The sections are:

- Basic Information
- Personal Information
- Contact Information
- Education and Work

You can go back to these sections to add or make changes at a later time.
Step 2. Find friends on Facebook. Go to the top of the page and click on Friends.

If you know people who are already using Facebook, you can search for them using their full name or their email address by utilizing the search box at the bottom of the screen.

Note: If you have already entered Education and Work info into your profile, you can easily search your old high school or college classmates as well as current or past coworkers.

Once you find a potential “Facebook friend,” in your results list, you have 3 options:

- Add as Friend
- Send Message
- View Friends

If you select Add as Friend they will need to approve your “friend request”. Until they approve you, you are not able to view their profile. You will be notified when you are approved.

Send Message is a brief message that you can send someone along with a friend request or in lieu of one. For example, to help an old classmate remember you and accept your friend request, you could write them a quick note reminding them how you know each other.

View Friends is an option to see who else your potential “Facebook friend” has on their friend list. Let’s say your friend has a common name and did not post a picture in their profile. You can verify that this is the correct person by checking their list of friends to see if you have friends in common.

Step 3. Let’s go back to your home page and learn about News Feed

Here you can update your status:

What’s on your mind? [Input field]

Your current status is a short summary of what you are doing or how you’re feeling.

You can also see your News Feed. Every time you update your status, add a new application to your profile or edit information, this information is recorded and broadcast to your friends, who can keep track of your latest actions. You also get to see what your friends are up to and the resulting page is called the News Feed.
Step 4. Photos
You may have noticed that people add photos in their profiles. This is a personal choice, and some people opt not to show themselves in their photos.

Until you add a photo, your default profile setting will look like this:

Go back to your Profile page.

When you click on the Photos tab, you will be prompted to Add New Photos.

Name your album (such as “photos of me”) and decide who you want to view it under Privacy.

Then click on Create Album.

This next bit can be a little confusing, depending on whether or not you use a Mac computer.
The most basic way to upload photos is to use the Simple Uploader at the bottom of the page.

Once you browse your computer for photos, agree to the terms of use and click Upload Photos. Now you have created a photo album!

How to communicate on Facebook

There are several ways to communicate with your friends via Facebook and each method follows different rules of etiquette.
Wall Posts

Wall posting is generally reserved for short, public comments that you don’t mind letting the entire Facebook community read. Your post will appear on the comment board on your friend’s profile, along with all the other comments they’ve received from other friends.

This is not the place to get too personal since everyone with access to a person’s profile has access to these messages. Keep them short and sweet.

Sending Messages

This is like sending an e-mail to your friend, only they receive the message in their Facebook account inbox. These are private messages for when you have something personal to say that you’d prefer to not let the rest of the community see.

Facebook Chat

Check out the icon at the lower right-hand corner of your screen. Look for a grey upper body with a red dot beside it. Click the icon. A chat screen will pop up that will ask if you want to go online. If you click the option, a list of all your Facebook friends currently online and available to chat will pop up.

From here you can send friends who are online an instant message. (Remember, it’s less intrusive to just write on someone’s wall or message them.)

Some additional articles that might be helpful:

- A newbie’s guide to Facebook
  http://www.computerworld.com/action/article.do?command=viewArticleBasic&articleId=9070138
- How to use Facebook professionally
- How to use Facebook to promote your business or blog
  http://www.trevorginn.com/facebook-business/